

REMARKS/ARGUMENTS

Prior to entry of the present Amendment, claims 1-19 were pending. In the present Amendment, claims 1, 16 and 19 are amended, and claims 5-6 and 14-15 are cancelled without prejudice, leaving claim 4 in its original form and claims 2-3, 7-13 and 17-18 in their previously presented form. New claims 20-24 are added. No new matter is added.

Examiner's Interview

Applicants appreciate the Examiner's time and consideration during the Telephone Interview held on August 31, 2011. During the Interview, Applicants' representative and Examiner Graham discussed proposed amended independent claim 1 and prior art including cited German Patent Document No. DE 195 46 906 ("Edele") and Japanese Patent Document No. JP 2001-294127 ("Shibata") and newly-cited French Patent Document No. FR 2 749 243 ("Princet") and U.S. Patent No. 5,211,485 ("Hoshino"). Agreement was not reached on the claims.

Claim Rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112

The Examiner rejected claim 19 under 35 U.S.C. § 112, first paragraph, as lacking enablement, for the reason set forth on page 2 of the Office action. Claim 19 has been amended to correct its dependency, and, Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections under 35 U.S.C. § 112, second paragraph.

Claim Rejections under the Prior Art

The Examiner rejected claims 1-8 and 11-17 under 35 U.S.C. § 102(b) as being taught by Edele or by Shibata. Also, the Examiner rejected claims 9 and 18 under 35 U.S.C. § 103 as being obvious over Edele. In addition, the Examiner rejected claims 10 and 19 as being obvious over Edele in view of U.S. Patent No. 6,027,157 ("Epple"). Finally, the Examiner rejected claims 9-10 and 18-19 as being obvious over Shibata. Applicants respectfully request reconsideration of the rejections.

Independent Claim 1

Independent claim 1 defines a windshield wiper device (10) comprising at least one wiper bearing (14) having an end surface and an outer surface and supporting at least one wiper shaft (16), which has at least one undercut (48) in which a securing device (40) for axially

fixing the wiper shaft (16) in the wiper bearing (14) is arranged, which securing device is displaced by the effects of a defined axial force component (F) on the wiper shaft (16), whereby the wiper shaft (16) is displaced in relationship to the wiper bearing (14), characterized in that the securing device (40) comprises a bushing section (42) supporting the wiper shaft (16) and with an indentation (50), which engages in the undercut (48) of the wiper shaft (16), a flange section (44) attached to the bushing section (42) and engaging the end surface of the wiper bearing (14), and a bushing-shaped closure section (46) attached to the flange section (44) and surrounding a portion of the outer surface of the wiper bearing (14).

Edele discloses (see Fig. 5) a bearing housing 3 and a bearing bushing 1 supporting a wiper shaft 12. The shaft 12 defines annular grooves 18, and the bushing 1 has indentations 21, 22 received in the grooves 18.

As discussed during the Interview, Edele does not teach or suggest, among other things, a windshield wiper device including a securing device having a bushing-shaped closure section attached to a flange section and surrounding a portion of an outer surface of a wiper bearing. In Edele, the bushing 1 is located inside the housing 3, between the housing 3 and the shaft 12 and, therefore, does not include the claimed closure section. For at least this independent reason, Edele does not teach or suggest the subject matter of independent claim 1.

Shibata discloses a bearing part 41 supporting a pivot shaft 3 with an annular groove 32. A washer 5 has a seat part 51 seated on an end surface 42 of the bearing part 41 and catch pieces 54 engaging the groove 32.

As also discussed during the Interview, Shibata does not teach or suggest, among other things, a windshield wiper device including a securing device having a bushing-shaped closure section attached to a flange section and surrounding a portion of an outer surface of a wiper bearing. The washer 5 of Shibata does not include any structure corresponding to the claimed closure section. Applicants submit that Shibata also does not teach or suggest the claimed bushing section but merely discloses catch pieces 54 engaging the groove 32 of the shaft 3.

For at least these independent reasons, Shibata does not teach or suggest the subject matter of independent claim 1.

Applicants have reviewed Princet and Hoshino which were identified by the Examiner during the Interview. Applicants respectfully submit that neither reference teaches or suggests, among other things, a windshield wiper device including a securing device for axially fixing a wiper shaft in a wiper bearing, which securing device is displaced by the effects of a defined axial force component on the wiper shaft, whereby the wiper shaft is displaced in relationship to

the wiper bearing. In Princet, the sealing sleeve 52 positions the wiper mechanism 10 for attachment to the plate 34, and there is no teaching or suggestion that the sealing sleeve 52 is displaced by the effects of a defined axial force component on the wiper shaft 14. In Hoshino, the cover member (un-numbered) covers the end of the shaft 1 and the sleeve 2, and there is no teaching or suggestion of any structure that is displaced by the effects of a defined axial force component on the shaft 1. For at least these independent reasons, Princet and Hoshino also do not teach or suggest the subject matter of independent claim 1.

Applicants submit that the other prior art discussed during the Interview, Princet and Hoshino, does not teach or suggest the subject matter of independent claim 1. Edele and Shibata, alone or in combination with each other and with this additional prior art, does not teach or suggest the subject matter defined by independent claim 1. Accordingly, independent claim 1 is allowable. Dependent claims 2-4, 7-13 and 16-19 and new dependent claims 20-21 depend from independent claim 1 and are allowable for at least the same and other independent reasons.

New Independent Claim 22

New independent claim 22 defines a windshield wiper device (10) comprising at least one wiper bearing (14) having an end surface and an outer surface and supporting at least one wiper shaft (16), which has at least one undercut (48) in which a securing device (40) for axially fixing the wiper shaft (16) in the wiper bearing (14) is arranged, which securing device is displaced by the effects of a defined axial force component (F) on the wiper shaft (16), whereby the wiper shaft (16) is displaced in relationship to the wiper bearing (14), characterized in that the securing device (40) comprises a bushing section (42) supporting the wiper shaft (16) and with an indentation (50), which engages in the undercut (48) of the wiper shaft (16), the bushing section having a wall with an inner surface and an outer surface, the wall having a first cylindrical portion on one axial side of the indentation and a second cylindrical portion on an opposite axial side of the indentation, the wall being bent between the cylindrical portions to provide the indentation on the inner surface and a corresponding recess on the outer surface, the securing device also comprising a flange section (44) attached to the second cylindrical portion of the bushing section (42) and engaging the end surface of the wiper bearing (14), and a bushing-shaped closure section (46) attached to the flange section (44) and surrounding a portion of the outer surface of the wiper bearing (14).

Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art does not teach or suggest the subject matter of new independent claim 22, such as, for example, the claimed structure of the securing device (40). Accordingly, independent claim 22 is allowable.

New Independent Claim 23

New independent claim 23 defines a method of installing a windshield wiper device (10), the windshield wiper device including at least one wiper bearing (14) having an end surface and an outer surface and supporting at least one wiper shaft (16), which has at least one undercut (48) in which a securing device (40) for axially fixing the wiper shaft in the wiper bearing is arranged, which securing device is displaced by the effects of a defined axial force component (F) on the wiper shaft, whereby the wiper shaft is displaced in relationship to the wiper bearing, the securing device (40) comprising a bushing section (42) having a wall with an inner surface and an outer surface, a flange section (44) attached to the bushing section, and a bushing-shaped closure section (46) attached to the flange section, the method comprising positioning the securing device with the bushing section supporting the wiper shaft, the flange section engaging the end surface of the wiper bearing, and the closure section surrounding a portion of the outer surface of the wiper bearing, and pressing the bushing section with an external force to form an indentation (50), which engages in the undercut of the wiper shaft.

Applicants respectfully submit that the prior art does not teach or suggest the subject matter of new independent claim 23, such as, for example, pressing the bushing section with an external force to form an indentation, which engages in the undercut of the wiper shaft. Accordingly, independent claim 23 is allowable. New dependent claim 24 depends from independent claim 23 and is allowable for at least the same and other independent reasons.

CONCLUSION

In view of the foregoing, Applicants respectfully request entry of the present Amendment and allowance of claims 1-4, 7-13 and 16-24.

If additional consultation will further prosecution, the undersigned is available during normal business hours at the below-identified telephone number.

Respectfully submitted,

/Edward R. Lawson Jr./

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